To the Right Honorable the high Court of Parliament;

The humble Remonstrance of WILLIAM SYKES *Merchant, for free Trade in transporting & importing of lawfull and needfull commodities.*

WHereas of late the Remonstrant, and *Thomas Johnson* Merchant, for themselves, and on the behalfe of all the free-men of *England*, did petition both Houses of Parliament for *Free Trade*; which they are confident is the Common-wealths BIRTHRIGHT, *and reparations for Wrongs done by those Ingrossers and Monopolizers*, who by vertue of Patents, have been, and are sellers of that hereditable right, as the *Company of Merchant-Adventurers* have done to *Cisizens for* 100. l. a man, and to Countrey people for 50. l. *a man*. The like may be said of the *Company of East-countrey Merchants*, *Muscovia Merchants*, *Turkie Merchants*, and other *Companies of Merchants*, who have for a long time practised this way of *trade-selling*, and *Monopolizing*, to the great grievance of the people, and detriment to FREE TRADE, both at home and abroad.

Which Petition was presented to most *Members of both Houses*, and dispersed into the severall *Counties* of *England*, that this honorable *Court* may no longer delay the discharge of their trust, but speedily improve their power to rescue FREE TRADE

from such *Liberty-destroyers* and *Trade-ingrossers*, and that the *people* may the better know for what *end* and *purpose* they have adventured their *lives* and *estates* in these present warres.

Yet the said Petition is not so much as publickly read in either House of Parliament, far lesse debated or answered, though the *Common-wealth be so much concerned in it*, as in nothing more, if the *people* knew their *right and freedome*, which this present Parliament hath confirmed, by the confirmation of *Magna Charta*, and by the executing of justice on the Earle of *Strafford* for his exercising *arbitrary government against the freedome of England*; therefore the *Remonstrant* doth conceive, that hee is bound in duty to *follow the said petition with this Remonstrance*, which he was emboldned to present for these two ensuing reasons, and to answer some *objections*, referring the conclusion to a serious resolution.

Reas. 1. The first reason is *drawn from the second Table of Gods law*, which commands us to love our neighbour as our selves: This BIRTH-RIGHT OF FREE TRADE *being as well our neighbours right as our own*, therefore we petitioned as well for our neighbours, as for our selves.

Reas. 2. The second reason *is drawn from the intent of the Protestation*, which we solemnly took in the presence of Almighty God, *To maintain the right and priviledge of the people with our lives and estates*; this *Free trade being all mens right and priviledge* as well as our own, upon that ground we were moved to *petition* as well for their right of *Free Trade*, as for our own.

Obj. 1. But these Companies have been of long standing.

Ans. So have the Prelats, and so much the more wrong done to the Common-wealth, and therefore so much the greater need to be put down. For although robbing and taking of purses upon the high way, be of ancient standing, yet it doth not thereupon follow that such a practice is ever the lawfuller.

Ob. 2. But *Magna Charta* doth continue Bishops. (But I say, *Magna Charta* doth not establish Bishops, but onely the liberties and rights of the Church of *England*: and what those are, the Scripture doth best tell us. And although Bishops be taken away, yet the liberties of the Church established by *Magna Charta*, to this very day remain,) And admits transportation of wooll.

Answer

Anſ. It is one thing to pull down Biſhops, and make an Act a-gainſt tranſporting of wool, *being the deſire and for the good of all*; but it is another thing *to take away the peoples Birth-right, FREE TRADE, without their conſent*, and to their prejudice, yea and a-gainſt *many petitions of many thouſands in many Parliaments* pre-ferred for the reſcuing of that right, and reparations for the coun-tries wrongs.

Obj. 3, But *Free trade will be deſtructive to the Common-wealth.*

Anſ. It will bee no more deſtructive to *Eaſtland*, *Muſcovia*, *Turkie*, the *Low-Countries*, and other places, then it is for *France*, *Spain*, *Ireland*, *Portugal*, and *Scotland*, which is none at all.

Obj. 4. But *Cloath* is of another and better nature then Wine, &c. which are forraigne commodities.

Anſ. The greater is the wrong, *it being the grand in-land com-modity*, ſo that all other *Patents* and *Monopolies* may bee better renewed, then this continued.

Obj. 5. But *Clothiers*, and the like men, have not knowledge to manage this *Free Trade.*

Anſ. If it were ſo (as it is not) yet the ſame is occaſioned by theſe *theeves and robbers*, that cunningly and ſecretly by a faire but unjuſt and deceitfull pretence, *ſteale* the Common-wealths right, ſo as they are deprived of that opportunity to educate their children and ſervants, which may enable them to manage that priviledge of *Free Trade.*

Obj. 6. But they are againſt government, and would walk diſ-orderly.

Anſ. No, we would have both government and order in a ſolid and juſt way, but we are againſt helliſh oaths, unlawful fines, ſin-full orders, falſe impriſonment, law and right-ſellers, all which are practiſed by theſe *Trade-ingroſſers*, as will appeare by good teſti-mony.

Obj. 7. But no man hath followed the petition.

Anſ. Is it not the duty of every Truſtee in the Houſe of Com-mons to proſecute the *Common-Wealths right*, and peoples privi-ledge? But if that be the hinderance, it is the humble deſire of the *Remonſtrant*, that Mr. *Rigby*, and Mr. *Martin* may be appoin-ted to draw up a full *Ordinance* without delay, that hee or they, whoſoever they be, under what pretence or fraud ſoever, may bee

accurſed that removes his neighbours land-mark (his Birth-right, or Free trade) and that the Commons houſe may approve themſelves faithfull, and worthy the Common-wealths truſt, and according to the ſolemne proteſtation, to bring to exemplary and condigne puniſhment, thoſe who have been theeves and robbers in this kind; and according to an order made this preſent Parliament, it is earneſtly deſired, that the Houſe may be purged of all ſuch as are Patentees, Monopolizers, Trade-ingroſſers, Sellers of peoples right, and deſtroyers of the *Free Trade*.

And alſo out of all other places of publick truſt under the Parliament, whether in the *Cuſtome-houſe, Commiſſion of Exciſe, Committees in City or Countrey, Soldiery, or other government, as Sheriffs, Treaſurers, Majors, Aldermen*, and the like, who are not worthy to be continued in any *Common-wealths truſt*; & ſo much the more, by how much the longer they have practiſed ſuch deceitfull *robbery*, and to let all ſuch as have been wronged by theſe kind of men, have freedom with reſpect and countenance, to proſecute againſt theſe Caterpillers, for due reparations, according to the wrongs done by them and their Predeceſſors.

And if the *Parliament* would have the free people to fight for them, as they have willingly done, by venturing their lives and eſtates freely, to maintain their power and priviledge *againſt the common enemy*; then let that power bee improved and laid out again *for the right and priviledge of the ſaid people*, to reſcue and recover their *Birth-right (Free Trade)* out of the hands of thoſe *greedy and ſubtile ſpoylers*, yea and *grinders of the faces of the poore*.

If any further objection be made againſt *Free trade*; then it is earneſtly deſired that the *Houſe of Commons would anſwer it themſelves*, as parties in behalfe of the *free people*, who have called them to *that truſt for that end*; or otherwiſe let the mind & ſenſe of the *common people in every County and Corporation* (all *Englond* over) be produced, and let it go upon that, in which way the *Remonſtrant* is perſwaded, that a hundred to one will bee for *Free Trade*.

So hoping this high and *Honorable Court* will have due reſpect to the premiſes, in all *dutifull acknowledgement*; the *Remonſtrant* ſhall deſire to prove himſelfe the *Common-wealths ſervant*,

March 20. 1645. *William Sykes.*

FINIS.